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ABSTRACT

This Fastback provides a guide for developing a partnership between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher in order to make student teaching a rewarding experience for all involved. It explains that the relationship between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher needs to be one of collaboration and mutual respect in order to ensure that the experience benefits the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the students in the classroom. Many factors influence this relationship, including planning, feedback, honesty, and guidance. The chapters focus on the following topics: "Preparing for Student Teaching," "Building a Good Relationship," "Developing the First Lesson Plan," "Giving and Receiving Feedback," and "Concluding the Student Teaching Experience." Each section presents information on the role of the cooperating teacher and the role of the student teacher in various situations. (Contains 11 references.) (SM)

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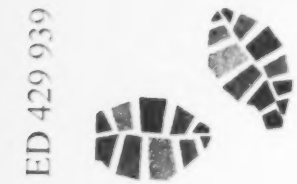

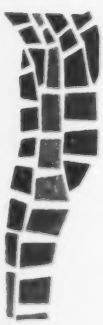

Making Student Teaching Work: Creating a Partnership

Mary A. Lowenhaupt
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Making Student Teaching Work: Creating a Partnership

by
Mary A. Lowenhaupt
and
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Introduction

Student teaching is the culmination of years of preparation and hard work on the part of students majoring in the field of education. It is where the theory of effective teaching that was learned in college coursework is put into practice.

The relationship between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher needs to be one of collaboration and mutual respect to ensure that the experience benefits the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the students in the classroom. Many factors influence this relationship, including planning, feedback, honesty, and guidance.

The information in this fastback is designed to serve as a guide in developing a partnership between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher to make student teaching a rewarding experience for all involved.

Preparing for Student Teaching

Preparation by both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher is vital to the success of the student teaching experience. Student teaching is a bridge between the university's coursework and the start of a teaching career. For the well-prepared cooperating teacher and student teacher, crossing this bridge can be painless and even pleasurable. If both participants are cognizant of each other's roles in this partnership, the resulting venture can be a positive learning experience for all involved, including the students in the classroom.

The Role of the Cooperating Teacher

The cooperating teacher influences the student teacher more than any other single instructor; the student teacher will spend nearly a third of his or her education program with the cooperating teacher (Osunde 1996). With that in mind, having a student teacher is a responsibility not to be taken lightly. However, with the proper planning, supervising a newcomer to the profession also can be a fulfilling and rewarding

experience. Before the student teacher arrives in the classroom, the cooperating teacher needs to address the following needs:

Set aside an area for the student teacher. It will help the student teacher to feel welcome if an area is already prepared before his or her arrival. This might be simply a worktable, another teacher desk, or a group of student desks in which the student teacher can store materials and find a place to work.

Prepare information concerning the school and classroom procedures. A folder or packet containing the following items will be extremely valuable to a student teacher coming into new surroundings.

Copies of:

- Class rosters
- Seating charts
- Daily schedules
- A school handbook
- A school calendar
- Names of other faculty members
- Classroom rules
- Names of support staff (secretaries, custodians, the school nurse, etc.)

Procedures for:

- Taking attendance
- Taking the lunch count
- Conduct in the lunchroom
- Dismissal

- Bus duty
- Fire drills
- Accidents or illnesses
- Photocopying materials

Locations of:

- Restrooms
- Health room or nurse's office
- Gymnasium
- Auditorium
- Cafeteria
- Library
- Mailboxes
- Faculty workroom, lounge
- Audiovisual equipment

Plan times to meet with student teacher on a regular basis. Having a designated time each day to meet with the student teacher ensures consistent communication and feedback. The cooperating teacher should make a tentative meeting schedule before the student teacher arrives and then confirm that schedule so that both individuals understand the expectations. Convenient meeting times tend to be mornings before students arrive, designated planning periods, or at the end of the workday. Meeting times should be chosen to avoid distractions, such as students arriving to ask questions or seek advice.

Tell students about the student teacher who will be arriving. A few days before the student teacher comes to work, tell the students that another teacher will be joining them shortly and include them in the classroom

preparations for the student teacher. It is important for students to understand that the student teacher should be accorded the same respect and cooperation that is required by the regular teacher. Students should know that they also can turn to the student teacher for help, to ask questions, and to obtain permission for various activities, just as they do with the regular teacher.

The Role of the Student Teacher

Organization is the key to successful student teaching (Long, Gaynor, and Erwin 1993). If a student teacher begins to organize and plan for the classroom experience ahead of time, he or she will find that feelings of anxiety and stress about this new venture can be significantly reduced. In preparing for the first day on the job as a student teacher, the individual should:

Put his or her personal life in order. Student teaching is a rigorous endeavor that will involve experiences that are quite different from life on the university campus. A new sense of time management will be essential, which can be complicated by personal factors, such as family obligations, babysitting needs, transportation needs, and so on. All of these personal factors need to be addressed well before the start of the student teaching experience in order to avoid needless stress and distraction. Part-time employment during the student teaching experience is particularly unwise. The student teacher needs to be able to focus on his or her new responsibilities.

Be familiar with pertinent university requirements. Most university education departments have a student teach-

ing manual that can provide useful information. Technicalities that often need to be addressed include obtaining all necessary background clearances for working with children, obtaining information about state certification procedures, and a recent test for tuberculosis.

Prepare an information packet for the cooperating teacher. By way of introduction, it is helpful if the student teacher prepares a background information packet that includes a short personal history; copies of evaluation forms, lesson plan forms, and observation forms; and other pertinent information that will help the cooperating teacher to better know the student teacher. It also is essential for the student teacher to provide the cooperating teacher with the name and telephone number of the university supervisor.

Contact the cooperating teacher before arriving at the school. Prior to the first day on the job, the student teacher would be well-advised to call the school and speak to the cooperating teacher. This provides the opportunity to establish an arrival time and to learn where to go in the new school — and it makes a good impression.

Be A.R.M.E.D. for the student teaching experience. The student teacher should remember the acronym as a way of focusing on positive traits: Exhibit a positive **A**ttitude, accept **R**esponsibility, display **M**aturity, exude **E**nthusiasm, and show **D**etermination. Demonstrating these attributes will help to ensure that the student teacher is successful.

Building a Good Relationship

Both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher have specific roles and responsibilities that need to be defined at the beginning of their relationship. This teaching/learning relationship has been described in a variety of ways. A common comparison has been that of a mentor-protégé (Gratch 1998; McWilliams 1995). McWilliams (1995) went on to elaborate on the different kinds of relationships, ranging from the student teacher being a partner of the cooperating teacher to the cooperating teacher being the coach, calling the plays (lessons) from the sidelines with the quarterback (student teacher) having to execute them. Every relationship will possess its own character, but the development of a positive collaboration is the key to making the relationship work.

Many times, the student teacher and the cooperating teacher have met or, at least, spoken by telephone. However, the first face-to-face meeting will set the tone for the entire student teaching experience. Therefore it is important for both individuals to put forth their best effort to establish rapport and a positive working envi-

ronment. Central to this first meeting should be a discussion of goals: the student teacher's goals for the student teaching experience, the cooperating teacher's goals for the experience, and the cooperating teacher's goals for his or her class(es).

Another key participant in establishing a good relationship is the university supervisor. Interaction among the student teacher, the university supervisor, and the cooperating teacher (although not necessarily a "first-day" interaction) can help to make the start of the student teaching experience highly productive. The university supervisor can assist the student teacher in developing lessons, finding materials, and establishing classroom management techniques. The cooperating teacher can use the insights of the university supervisor to make sure that he or she is providing the necessary guidance to the student teacher. Because the university supervisor can devote only a limited amount of time to each student teacher, it is essential that both student teacher and cooperating teacher communicate openly and frequently about the day-to-day occurrences in the classroom.

The Role of the Cooperating Teacher

To focus on the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher, we look at what each must do to foster a good relationship. Let's begin with the cooperating teacher.

Student teachers often are anxious about beginning the student teaching experience. The challenges that face them can seem overwhelming. Feelings of inade-

quacy and self-doubt may color their perception of the coming experience. An effective cooperating teacher is aware of these emotions and takes steps to alleviate the newcomer's anxiety.

To put the student teacher at ease, the cooperating teacher needs to treat him or her as a professional peer from the very beginning. Although the student teacher is a novice in the classroom, if the cooperating teacher views the student teacher as a professional, then the students that the new teacher faces will, in turn, accept the student teacher as a "real" teacher. One simple way to establish this stance is to introduce the student teacher as another teacher, not as a student teacher per se. Furthermore, if the cooperating teacher then shares with the student teacher the authority to make decisions within the classroom, the students will see the student teacher as an independent professional. This viewpoint can help to alleviate the common situation of students ignoring the student teacher and responding only to the cooperating teacher, whom they view as the "real" teacher in the classroom.

In the role of "first colleague," the cooperating teacher must help the student teacher to feel at home in the professional "society" of the school. This means introducing the student teacher to other faculty members, including the student teacher in faculty meetings and other official functions, and involving the student teacher in the normal informal associations that take place among professional educators.

Here are two situations worth considering. It should be obvious which student teacher will more likely find student teaching a rewarding experience.

It was Marcy's first day of student teaching in Long Creek Elementary School. This new experience filled her with a great deal of apprehension. She had heard horror stories from others about their student teaching experiences, and she was not sure what to expect. From the moment she came into the building, Mrs. Lang, who was waiting for her at the office, made her feel part of the faculty by introducing her to everyone and including her as a partner in everything. When lunchtime arrived and Mrs. Lang asked her to join her in the faculty room, Marcy immediately felt more comfortable and relaxed in her role as a student teacher.

Down the hall from Mrs. Lang's classroom, Justin began his student teaching experience with Mrs. Reilly. When Justin arrived at Long Creek Elementary School, no one was in the office except for the secretary, who was taking a phone call. After waiting for what seemed like a lifetime, the secretary finally directed him to Mrs. Reilly's room. After making a few wrong turns, he eventually found an empty room, where he proceeded to sit down and wait for his cooperating teacher. Mrs. Reilly arrived moments before the children, so there was time only for hurried introductions before the school day started. Justin assumed that lunchtime would be an opportunity to cement their budding relationship. Much to his dismay, when lunchtime arrived Mrs. Reilly bolted out of the classroom shouting behind her, "If you need me, I'll be in the faculty room." Having no idea where the faculty room was located, Justin ate a lonely lunch in the classroom, feeling like an interloper.

Most student teachers are hesitant to jump right into classroom activities, because they are not sure what

kind of response they will get from their cooperating teacher. A sensitive cooperating teacher will understand this hesitancy and invite the student teacher to participate immediately. When the cooperating teacher can indicate specifically the form of involvement expected from the student teacher, the results are beneficial for everyone — including the students in the classroom, of course. Teachers are accustomed to structuring "getting to know you" activities for their students on the first day of school. They should be equally thoughtful and creative in creating "getting to know you" activities to involve the student teacher right away. The following scenario illustrates this idea:

> Mrs. Knightwood, an experienced cooperating teacher, used a common ice-breaking activity on Shannon's first day of student teaching. First thing in the morning after opening exercises, Mrs. Knightwood passed a large bag of M&Ms around the classroom. "Take as many as you want but leave enough so that everybody gets some, including our new teacher," she told the class. "Remember, don't eat them until I say so!"
>
> After the M&Ms were distributed, Mrs. Knightwood announced, "Before you eat your candy, you have to tell us one good thing about yourself for each M&M that you took." The children excitedly shared personal information, and so Shannon learned a little bit about each child. Shannon also felt comfortable telling the students about herself under those relaxed conditions.

Almost invariably the student teaching experience is the first time that a future teacher will be in the classroom full time for an extended period. Most classroom

experiences prior to student teaching are limited to short-term experiences. Therefore most student teachers do not yet realize all of the teaching and learning possibilities that classroom practice holds. The responsibility for both planning and teaching lessons can seem overwhelming. The knowledgeable cooperating teacher recognizes the student teacher's lack of classroom experience and introduces the realities — and potential — of classroom practice methodically without overwhelming the student teacher. The following scenario illustrates this point:

> David arrived in Mr. Martinez's classroom eager to get started but not knowing how to begin. After having David observe homeroom activities the first day, Mr. Martinez turned over the responsibilities of taking attendance and making morning announcements to David. These simple yet important tasks immediately made David part of the teaching team. He became acquainted with the students and had no trouble taking over other routine duties, such as making copies and keeping track of absence excuses. Mr. Martinez knew that having David handle these tasks early would give David a sense of the classroom quickly. Later, this easy familiarity with routine would provide David with more time to concentrate on planning and teaching.

Consistency in the classroom is important, and so most cooperating teachers make certain to share information with their student teachers about school routines and classroom procedures. It is easy to take routine for granted — for the experienced teacher. But routines are learned behaviors that students and stu-

dent teachers alike must acquire. Such routines, once set in place, are time-savers. They "make" time for more important tasks, such as planning lessons and working one-on-one with students. This is a key awareness that cooperating teachers must possess.

Behavior management — poor management being another time-waster — often is a concern of student teachers. Some student teachers attempt to manage behavior by becoming friends with the students; however, this strategy invariably backfires. The student teacher loses authority; and authority, once lost, is hard to re-establish. At the other end of the spectrum is the student teacher who attempts to assert authority by being dictatorial. Students view this type of teacher as unfair or uncaring and likely will respond accordingly. The experienced cooperating teacher can help the unsure student teacher find a balance between these extremes by sharing his or her own effective classroom management strategies that emphasize consistency, fairness, and kindness.

At the same time we should note that no student teacher, however well coached, is going to pass through the student teaching experience without making mistakes. It is important for the cooperating teacher to attend to the student teacher's mistakes but to do so in a way that does not diminish the student teacher's authority in the classroom. Most errors in judgment can be dealt with outside the presence of students.

One of the best things that a cooperating teacher can do for a student teacher is to help in the development of a resource file. Beginning on the first day, the coop-

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erating teacher can emphasize the importance of gathering effective materials to use in future teaching:

> Janet's cooperating teacher, Mr. Chase, decorated a computer paper box with brightly colored contact paper. He also labeled a number of file folders with the names of subjects, "Bulletin Board Ideas," and "Holidays." As part of his welcome to Janet, Mr. Chase pointed out the box and said, "Janet, this box is a place for you to store all the ideas you come across while you are with us. Feel free to make copies of anything you find to begin developing your resource file." Janet felt this was a wonderful welcome and felt truly accepted as a colleague.

The Role of the Student Teacher

First impressions are lasting impressions. Although the student teacher may have met briefly with the cooperating teacher, the first "official" day on the job can set the tone for the entire student teaching experience. To begin, it is important for the student teacher to know the check-in routine: when and where to report, whether to sign in, and so on.

Grooming is another consideration. While standards of professional dress have been relaxed over the years, it is still possible to distinguish between appropriate college attire and appropriate professional attire. Student teachers should "upscale" their wardrobe in most cases. Jeans, shorts, and tennis shoes generally should be avoided — even if the regular teachers themselves are permitted to "dress down" routinely or occasionally. On the other hand, standard business dress (suits, ties, high heels, etc.) also will be out of place in most schools.

While the standard of dress may vary, an essential element is neatness. Clothes should fit and be clean and ironed. Extreme hairstyles should be avoided, along with showy clothes and strong perfumes. Facial hair on men should be neatly trimmed, and individuals of both sexes should avoid excessive jewelry.

The best addition to being appropriately dressed is a ready smile and friendly manner. Personality and attitude influence first impressions, and most people appreciate being greeted with a smile.

In terms of "equipment" the most worthwhile item is a notebook. Student teaching from the first day onward will present new information, often with such rapidity that the student teacher may find it hard to take it all in. A notebook is more than handy; it is essential. And along with the notebook should be the attitude that no question is "stupid." Student teachers need to be unafraid to ask questions, and cooperating teachers and their colleagues should encourage them to ask questions, rather than to assume or guess.

Sometimes student teachers prefer to observe the cooperating teacher working with students. While observation is a meaningful component of student teaching, far more is learned by doing. If the cooperating teacher is hesitant about involving the student teacher in active teaching, then it may be up to the student teacher to initiate the experience by signaling readiness. One signal may simply be taking the initiative to circulate among students during worktime, responding to raised hands and questions without being asked to do so by the cooperating teacher. Another way to signal

readiness to move beyond simple observation is to volunteer to grade papers. But the student teacher cannot be discouraged if such an offer is refused on an individual basis. For example, the teacher might want to grade a particular set of papers in order to pinpoint certain problems as a way of planning a future lesson. This is a task not easily delegated to the student teacher.

Observation should not be neglected, however. The student teacher should be alert to observing student behaviors in the classroom, as well as in such nonacademic settings as the lunchroom, at recess, and between classes. Such informal observation can tell the student teacher much about students and student life in general. It also can reveal student interests, which can help to enrich lessons in the classroom.

Teaching is most effective when the teacher really gets to know the students. Student teachers need to make a special effort to learn the students' names as quickly as possible and to become familiar with the students' interests and abilities. This familiarity will help the student teacher with a major concern of newcomers to the classroom: management, or discipline. Behavior management is a high concern of many teachers, particularly student teachers.

Much has been written about effective ways to manage student behavior in the classroom (see, for example, Kauffman, Mostert, Trent, and Hallahan 1998; Zirpoli and Melloy 1997; Miltenberger 1997). Each teacher develops a management style that suits his or her needs and those of the students in the classroom. Student teaching provides a time for the newcomer to

work on developing a personal style, which can mean developing strategies that differ from those of the cooperating teacher even while working within the cooperating teacher's overall management framework. Following is an example:

> Mrs. Stevens, Rodney Newman's cooperating teacher, developed a behavior management system that uses rewards and consequences. Over the years, Mrs. Stevens came to focus more on consequences than rewards. Rodney's teacher education classes emphasized a high level of positive reinforcement as a behavior management strategy, and he observed it in action during his practicum.
>
> Rodney observed that Mrs. Stevens' use of negative consequences tended not to improve student behavior. In fact, often the opposite occurred; student behavior grew worse, because students assumed that punishment was the classroom norm. Working within Mrs. Stevens' management plan, Rodney emphasized positive rewards more than consequences. As a result, as Rodney began accepting a greater share of the teaching responsibilities, he also was able to see a shift to the positive in the students' attitudes toward their work in the classroom and toward him as a teacher.

In the previous scenario Rodney emphasized the positives in the behavior management plan because they produced the most effective results. However, some student teachers can be more concerned about being liked by students than about managing behavior effectively. When the student teacher treats students as friends, rather than maintaining a professional teacher-

student relationship, discipline becomes harder instead of easier.

We mentioned previously that one of the best things a cooperating teacher can do is to encourage the student teacher to build a file of resources to take away from the student teaching experience. It is up to the student teacher to follow through on that encouragement. Student teaching offers many opportunities not merely for applying what the student has learned in the university setting but also for learning new teaching techniques, discovering new materials, and acquiring files of useful worksheets, games, songs, project ideas, and the like. A useful addition to file folders and notebooks is a camera. The student teacher can photograph creative bulletin boards, displays, and even student activities and performances.

Finally, the student teacher should be alert to the importance of thinking ahead. Student teaching is no time for procrastination or just-in-time performance. A teacher's responsibilities are continuous; they build on one another. Anticipating students' needs, planning future lessons, and knowing and fulfilling responsibilities are key components of success, not only in student teaching but later in regular classroom practice. The most successful student teachers are those who recognize and honor the task commitment and focus that are required in teaching.

Developing the First Lesson

One of the most important moments in student teaching is when the student teacher moves from the sideline to the frontline and steps before the class to teach his or her first lesson.

This moment often is anxiously anticipated. The first lesson can spell success or disaster — at least in the mind of the student teacher — and so both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher need to approach this moment thoughtfully and with care. The first lesson is not the place to remedy or address a weak area of preparation. There will be time for that purpose later. The first lesson should work from the student teacher's strengths.

The Role of the Cooperating Teacher

The student teacher and the cooperating teacher must arrive at the choice of lesson together. Often, this is a matter for negotiation and compromise. After all, the cooperating teacher has a comprehensive curriculum plan, and the first lesson to be delivered by the student teacher must fit into that plan. At the same time, it is important

for the student teacher to be able to deliver instruction in ways that match his or her strengths and interests.

Effective lesson planning begins with the setting of objectives. A common mistake that student teachers make is choosing a topic that is too broad and therefore impossible to cover in the allotted lesson time. For example, the student teacher might want to take up the causes of the Civil War. While this lesson topic might be appropriate, it is quite complex. This is the point at which the cooperating teacher needs to step in and guide the student teacher to focus on key causes about which they want students to learn. These key causes of the Civil War then become the subject matter for specific learning objectives.

When the cooperating teacher and the student teacher have agreed on the learning objectives for the first lesson, the next step is to consider how those objectives will be addressed. Again, newcomers to the classroom tend to think superficially. It is the cooperating teacher's responsibility to help them delve deeper. At the same time, the cooperating teacher must avoid the temptation simply to tell the student teacher how to go about teaching the lesson. The cooperating teacher must guide, rather than direct. For example, if the student teacher wants to lecture about the Continental Divide, the cooperating teacher can ask whether the students might better understand the concept through the use of manipulatives or visual aids. This can start the student teacher thinking about hands-on activities to actively engage the students, thus supplementing the passive engagement of a lecture.

Lessons, like good stories, have a beginning, a middle, and an end. It is not unusual for the newcomer to teaching to put all of his or her effort "up front" and neglect the ending. The cooperating teacher needs to help the student teacher understand how to close a lesson effectively and how to evaluate what students have learned. Sometimes the student teacher also construes evaluation to mean a test or quiz. Thus the cooperating teacher's responsibility also includes enlarging the student teacher's repertoire of evaluation strategies, which may include projects (for example, a map, model, or diorama of the Continental Divide) and presentations in place of or in addition to formal assessment.

The most difficult lesson plan for student teachers to write is the first one. Neither the student teacher nor the cooperating teacher should be surprised if the first lesson plan needs to be edited or rewritten as ideas are discussed and the instructional plan matures. One of the stumbling blocks to innovation and the elaboration of an instructional plan often is the student teacher's lack of resources. The student teacher may feel as though he or she is limited to the textbook and the chalkboard. In this area, again, the cooperating teacher can help, either by pointing the student teacher toward sources of materials or opening his or her own files and cabinets to the student teacher. This responsibility is a natural extension of helping the student to become acquainted with the resources in the school library and the teacher workroom. The student teacher needs to know how to check out audiovisual and print materials, how to use AV equipment, and how to access information using a computer.

The Role of the Student Teacher

Good lesson planning is a must for good teaching. Certainly a good plan is the best way to start, even realizing that effectively carrying out that plan also is essential for success.

Experienced teachers often carry elaborate instructional plans in their heads, so to speak, carrying out lessons seemingly from an ingrained sense of how best to teach. But that is the value of experience, and experience is what the student teacher lacks. The absence of experience is compensated for by a written plan that expresses in some detail what and how the teacher will teach.

Although the lesson plan has evolved since its formulation in the 19th century, it remains a fundamental instrument for effective teaching (Golland 1998). There are many different formats that teachers use in planning, but most contain four basic components: objectives, materials, procedures, and evaluation. The student, at minimum, must articulate these four components for an effective lesson plan.

Objectives. We mentioned previously the cooperating teacher's role in setting objectives for the first lesson. But it falls to the student teacher to compose the language of the objectives, and this is not an unimportant task. Objectives point the way to learning outcomes. Rather than focusing on the process of teaching, effective objectives should focus on the result of teaching (Mager 1984). Most lessons will require more than one objective, but some may focus only on one. Mager (1984)

suggests that a complete objective has three distinct parts: the condition, the performance (behavior), and the criteria. The condition component needs to state what conditions are needed for the learner to be able to perform the behavior. The performance component needs to clearly state what the learner should be able to do in observable and measurable terms. And the criteria component needs to state how well the performance should be done.

The 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that both regular education and special education teachers jointly participate in the development of individual education plans (IEPs) for students with special needs. Therefore, some student teachers — and an increasing number because of the inclusion movement — will find themselves involved in meeting these regulations. Short-term objectives (benchmarks) must be observable and measurable. This means that the terminology used is important. For example, "Given an animal classified as a reptile, students will accurately give at least one characteristic of the animal," is an acceptable objective in terms of a learning outcome. By contrast, it would be unacceptable to state, "The students will know the characteristics of reptiles," because this objective does not state a way to observe and measure the students' knowledge (and, in any case, is rather too broad to be effective).

Materials. Every lesson requires certain materials. While a textbook may be sufficient, or worksheets or other simple materials may be readily at hand, the stu-

dent teacher will do well to consider supplements. Class time cannot be used to assemble materials; it is necessary to think ahead and obtain the materials in advance. For example, a lesson on reptiles can be brought to life, literally, by including a live snake, lizard, or turtle that the students can examine firsthand. Planning what to present and how to do it should lead easily to a consideration of materials needed, so that they can be gathered well in advance of any lesson. Being prepared for the first lesson will set the tone for the student teaching experience.

Procedures. The procedures for a lesson fall into three phases: introduction, development, and conclusion — or, as we suggested previously, beginning, middle, and end, just like a story. The introduction should: 1) find out what students already know about the lesson topic ("prior knowledge"), 2) stimulate the students to want to learn, and 3) tell the students what they will learn. In a lesson about reptiles, for example, the student teacher might stimulate student interest by showing the live specimen. Discussion at this point will help the student teacher discover what the students already know about reptiles and will provide an opening for the student teacher to talk about what the students will learn in the course of the lesson.

Development, the "middle," should follow smoothly from the introduction and may include direct instruction, hands-on activities, or lecture, keeping in mind that the least effective method of teaching is lecturing with no pupil interaction. The students who are most

successful in school are those who are actively engaged in learning activities (Carnine, Silbert, and Kameenui 1997). Guided practice during the development stage is necessary for the teacher to ensure that the students successfully learn the material.

Every lesson needs a conclusion that ties together the information and leads to evaluation. The conclusion must directly relate to the objectives stated in the introduction, making the lesson a learning "package," a complete story. The conclusion also serves as reinforcement and clarification, a time for students to ask questions that did not get answered during the development of the lesson. It is during this stage that independent practice would be assigned to assess mastery of the goals of the lesson. And so it is important for the student teacher to consider and to plan how the lesson might be drawn to a close on an equal basis with considering how to begin and develop a lesson.

Evaluation. The final component of a comprehensive lesson plan is the evaluation, which does not necessarily mean giving a test. Although tests are one way to assess student learning, there are countless other techniques to achieve that same end. A finished product, such as a drawing of a reptile, oral responses to questions, participation, and discussion, are all ways to appraise student learning. The important thing for the student teacher to do is to plan how evaluation will be carried out as an integral part of teaching the lesson, rather than as an after-thought.

There also is the unexpected to consider. No amount of planning can anticipate everything that will happen

in the course of teaching a lesson, and the first lesson may be no exception. The student teacher should be aware that the unanticipated can, and probably will, occur. The following scenario illustrates this point.

> Adam, a beginning student teacher, was thrilled to be teaching his first lesson on the white-tailed deer to a first-grade class in a suburban Pittsburgh community school. Having grown up in central Pennsylvania, Adam had seen deer often; and he was excited to share his knowledge.
>
> To capture his students' interest, Adam carefully prepared a series of video clips showing white-tailed deer in their natural environment. At the end of Adam's introduction, hands were waving in the air. Excited to see such a response, Adam called on Jared, eager to hear his initial response to the lesson introduction. Jared launched into a graphic description of a bloody deer he had once observed on the side of the road. This set the entire class off. Responses to Jared's story ranged from "Cool!" to "Yuk!" with everyone speaking at once, which left Adam at a loss as to how to respond to this situation. It took him several minutes to calm the class down so that he could proceed with the lesson.

In this scenario the student teacher, Adam, might have anticipated (perhaps with the cooperating teacher's wise counsel) some adverse reaction and so prepared a response. For example, he might simply have said, "Many of us have seen deer that have been hit by cars and left lying dead on the side of the road. Let's not talk about them right now. Let's talk about what we saw in the movie."

A final word: Student teachers at times feel overwhelmed by the amount of planning and preparation necessary to teach an effective lesson. They should be assured that this process becomes easier over time as the mental mechanics of creating an effective lesson become more automatic. Just as children must crawl before they walk, so beginning teachers must write plans in great detail before developing the ability to write plans with fewer details without compromising the effectiveness of the lesson.

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Giving and Receiving Feedback

While the most important responsibility is for the cooperating teacher to give feedback about the student teacher and the student teacher to receive it, the process works in the opposite direction as well. The cooperating teacher must be prepared to learn from the student teacher, and the student teacher must be prepared to be open and forthright about discussing important matters with the cooperating teacher.

Even the most experienced teachers can benefit from feedback about their teaching that is given to them by their principals and other administrators and, perhaps even more important, by their peers. Student teachers will learn from their cooperating teachers, but they also can learn from other student teachers, other teachers in the school, teachers in other schools, and their university supervisor. In the field of education, there always is something new to learn because children always change and offer new challenges. Sometimes the students also provide important feedback about instructional performance to the student teacher.

The Role of the Cooperating Teacher

A cooperating teacher who can provide specific feedback helps a student teacher reach his or her full potential (Coulon and Byra 1994). Unfortunately, many individuals view feedback only in negative terms, as criticism rather than a guidepost to improvement. It is on this point that good rapport weighs in. If a positive relationship has been established between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher, then performance feedback will more likely be seen as constructive. At the same time, the cooperating teacher must acknowledge an obligation to give feedback that is important and constructive; nitpicking invariably will be counterproductive. Following is an example of constructive feedback.

> Susie, the student teacher, taught a lesson on the 13 Colonies. She gave the students directions for completing a timeline that was to be turned in at the end of the week. As she was doing so, students in the back of the room continually called out, asking what to do. Susie explained the lesson several different ways, but still the students at the back did not seem to understand.
>
> Miss Sutherland, the cooperating teacher, observed from the back of the room. After the lesson, Miss Sutherland pointed out that the problems that Susie encountered were the result of Susie's soft voice not carrying well to the students in the back of the room. The students were calling out, not to be obnoxious, but because they could not hear everything Susie said. Miss Sutherland suggested that, in the future, Susie should circulate around the room as she teaches and ask the students if they can hear her clearly.

Feedback should not be limited to specific times. Incidental feedback — brief comments throughout the day — can be as valuable as concentrated, formal reviews. In addition to incidental feedback and specific observations and critiques, an effective policy is to sit down briefly each day, preferably at the end of the day, and review the day's events with the student teachers.

Many cooperating teachers are hesitant to give feedback, or to say anything critical, early in the assignment for fear that the student teacher will become discouraged. However, early feedback is important to correct habits or teaching behaviors that will lead to failure. This is equally true throughout the student teaching experience. The cooperating teacher must be honest with the student teacher and not be hesitant to give a true appraisal of performance, even if it must be negative. This "negative" feedback, as with criticism generally, should be counterbalanced with "positive" feedback. It also is important for the cooperating teacher to tell the student teacher what he or she is doing right, to give praise when it is due, and to commend innovation and creativity.

Perhaps the term *diplomacy* best sums up the challenge for the cooperating teacher in giving feedback:

> Mr. Delaney, a skilled cooperating teacher, was faced with the task of telling Belinda, the student teacher, that she frequently calls on the same students while ignoring the remainder of the class. He did so, first, by commending Belinda on the good job she does of circulating throughout the classroom. He then pointed out that most students do not volunteer answers when a question is posed. He told Belinda that he observed that

she calls on only those students who raise their hands, and then he suggested that she needs to call on other students as well. To implement this suggestion, Mr. Delaney suggested a method: Keep a list of the students and check off those that have been called on. This method should help Belinda solve the problem of calling too often on the same students.

The Role of the Student Teacher

The first thing that a student teacher must do with regard to feedback is to recognize that every professional's performance is evaluated in some way. In education, in addition to formal evaluation by a supervisor or administrator, the teacher has an obligation to self-evaluate.

Self-evaluation is difficult at first because of the student teacher's lack of experience on which to base such assessment. That is a good starting point for understanding the value of feedback during the student teaching experience. The feedback from the cooperating teacher is not intended to discourage the student teacher. Quite the contrary, such feedback must be viewed as it is intended, to inform the student teacher, to assist the student teacher in improving, and to form a basis for self-evaluation.

The honesty of the cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship and the rapport between the two individuals will be key to the acceptability and utility of feedback. Following is a scenario that illustrates this point:

Olga, a reasonably effective student teacher, had been teaching math for a week when her cooperating teacher, Ms. Jonah-Dempsey, took her aside and com-

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mented that some of the children did not understand the concept of place value that Olga had just finished teaching. This was something that Olga had not yet picked up on. What had she done wrong? Olga went home that evening in tears, certain that she was not capable of teaching math.

After a sleepless night, Olga got up the nerve to question Ms. Jonah-Dempsey about what she did wrong teaching the lesson. Surprised, Ms. Jonah-Dempsey informed Olga that there was nothing wrong with the way she taught the lesson. She simply meant that the concept of place value generally takes many days of review and that the students were not ready to move on to new material.

When the cooperating teacher critiques the student teacher, the student teacher also must take an active role in receiving feedback. It is insufficient merely to take in the cooperating teacher's comments. The student teacher must be certain to understand them — to seek clarification of ambiguity, to ask questions, to probe for background — and then to put them to use in shaping and reshaping performance.

While a student teacher's self-evaluation may be limited by lack of experience, it is not wholly without foundation. One way that a student teacher can self-evaluate is by examining the extent to which lesson objectives have been met. Another factor is *how* they were met. Did the students have to struggle to meet their learning goals? Or did the lesson move forward smoothly, so that the goals were readily met? These are questions that student teachers can pose for themselves.

Formal Evaluation

While feedback is a form of evaluation, it is not formal evaluation. Most student teachers will experience formal performance evaluation by the cooperating teacher and by the university supervisor. Often such evaluation is done on a regular basis during the student teaching experience. When such evaluation is conducted regularly, the written documentation can serve both as a learning tool and, collectively, to chart the student teacher's course to professional competence.

Unfortunately, formal evaluation tends to raise the stress level of most student teachers. Consequently, some effort should be made to help the student teacher understand that a formal evaluation is not "all or nothing." This effort must be made as much by the cooperating teacher as by the university supervisor.

Student teachers need to become comfortable with an understanding that formal evaluation is a part of becoming a professional and that such evaluation will occur even after they become seasoned teachers. While formal evaluation by the cooperating teacher may be less threatening, formal evaluation by the university supervisor should not raise unreasonable anxiety. Of course, the student teacher needs to understand that the classroom dynamics likely will be changed by the presence of the university supervisor (a "stranger"), whereas it will not be changed by the presence of the cooperating teacher who is in the classroom normally. Recognizing such details is a way of understanding them and dealing with them.

The student teacher also needs to realize that the university supervisor is looking not for perfection but for consistent growth in skills. Improvement is a key factor in determining success. The student teacher must be polishing his or her teaching performance each day, and that progress will be evident over a succession of formal evaluations. The student teacher's performance is being measured against the performance and skills of other beginners, not against those of veteran teachers.

Teaching is a lifelong learning process. Being observed and evaluated by another professional in the field can bring new perspectives and fresh ideas that can enhance instruction. If the evaluator is truly candid and offers practical suggestions, the teacher will be able to incorporate these recommendations into the classroom and to refine his or her competence. When the teacher — beginner or veteran — graciously accepts advice and incorporates it into classroom practice, he or she accepts one of the obligations of a professional.

Concluding the Student Teaching Experience

As the student teaching experience draws to a close, it is easy for student teachers and cooperating teachers to get caught up in all the activities that accompany the departure. It is crucial to not get so engrossed in these activities that details are neglected. Many student teachers will be graduating upon completing their student teaching, so this is the time to double-check that all the requirements are met for student teaching, certification, and graduation.

The last week should be a time for transition once again. To benefit the students, the cooperating teacher should gradually take over the responsibilities of the classroom so there is as little disruption to the flow of instruction as possible.

The Role of the Cooperating Teacher

Often the departure of a student teacher is bittersweet. As enjoyable as this experience may have been, it always is gratifying to a cooperating teacher to "have the classroom back."

Many cooperating teachers choose to have a good-bye party for the student teacher. This party can serve two purposes. It can show appreciation to the student teacher, and it can help students who may feel a sense of loss to accept the inevitable change.

Children love to be included in the planning of a party, and they are particularly fond of surprise parties. As the transfer of classroom responsibilities proceeds, a cooperating teacher can delegate tasks that require the student teacher to leave the classroom. That can serve as the perfect time to make arrangements for the festivities.

Some cooperating teachers feel obligated to buy a gift for the student teacher. Although this is appropriate, a far more heartwarming and meaningful gift comes from the students in the form of personal notes, cards, or small handmade gifts.

With the end of student teaching, the student teacher's thoughts are likely to turn to job hunting. This, too, is something with which the cooperating teacher can help. The cooperating teacher can share experiences, make suggestions about the application process, and help in the search for suitable job openings. Most universities require the cooperating teacher to write a final performance evaluation; this can easily serve as a foundation for a more personalized letter of reference. This letter, written on school letterhead, can open doors that otherwise might remain closed.

The Role of the Student Teacher

Coordination has been a watchword of student teaching, and the notion is never more pertinent than when

the student teacher must relinquish his or her responsibilities. Like the cooperating teacher, the student teacher must be concerned about making his or her departure a smooth transition for the students. Care should be taken close to departure time to conduct classroom projects that can be completed during the time remaining. Lessons and activities should not be left hanging.

The transition also will be smoother if the student teacher takes time to focus on some practicalities, such as gathering up borrowed materials and returning them, bringing final order to the resource file that he or she will take away, and ensuring that school and university paperwork is completed and submitted on time.

While the cooperating teacher's official evaluation and personal letter of recommendation will weigh heavily in future applications, the final weeks of the student teaching experience also are a time for gathering letters of recommendation from others in the school who have come to know the student teacher's work. These letters may be from the principal or assistant principal, a counselor or a coach, or another teaching colleague. Favorable letters from parents also can be collected, though they usually are not solicited by the student teacher unless some extraordinary service has been performed.

Finally, leave-taking can be emotional for all, and so efforts should be made to keep the parting upbeat. This is a time for the student teacher to express appreciation to the cooperating teacher and the students. Small gifts for students and the cooperating teacher are appropriate but not necessary.

The conclusion of student teaching marks the close of a period of concentrated professional growth. When the student teaching experience has been successful, this is cause for celebration.

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